

THE
ADVERTISEMENT
POSSIBILITY
AND

NECESSITY

Of the INWARD IMMEDIATE

REVELATION

Of the SPIRIT of

GOD

Towards the Foundation and Ground of True

FAITH, proved in a Letter write in

Latine, to a Person of Quality in

Holland; And now also put

into *Englisk*.

By R. B.

Printed in the Year 1686.

ADVERTISEMENT

To the READER.

THIS serves to inform thee, that it is above seven years since this Epistle was Printed in Latine, the Person to whom it was write, the Heer Paets, is a Man of no mean account both in the Learned and Politick World; The Conference I had with him was lately after his return from Spain, where he had been Ambassadour from the United Netherlands; I discoursed with him on the same Subject, last year at London, where he was one of the Commissioners for the Dutch Eastindian Company; but could not find him propose any thing new, nor what I could conceive had any weight towards a Reply; what his Reasons were, not to prosecute this Matter further, I shall not determine: But thus far he readily yeilded, That he had been mistaken in his notion of the Quakers, for he found they could make a Reasonable Plea for the foundation of their Religion. Upon my reading it over again, I find an inclination in my self, and was perswaded by some Friends, to publish it in a Language more obvious to all my Countrey Men. It is a Question now frequently tossed, What is the Ground and Foundation of Faith? And when the matter is sifted to the bottom, it resolves in Tradition or Revelation; for those who lay claim to the Scripture, and would make it the foundation of their Faith, do resolve it but in a Tradition, when

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To the READER.

the Motives of Credibility are enquired unto, since the subjective Revelation which they yield, comes but in the last place, and is by themselves termed medium incognitum assentiendi. And such a Revelation those of Rome will not refuse, to influence them to assent to the determination of the Church: So those Protestants who say, the subjective operation of the Spirit influences them, (tho they know not how) to believe the Scripture presented and conveyed to them by Tradition, as the Dictates of GODS Spirit, and so understand them as their Preachers interpret them; differ not much, or at least have not Reason to differ from the Church of Rome, who say, the Spirit influences them to believe the Scriptures as proposed by the Church, and according as her Doctors and Councils interpret them. And neither has any better foundation than Tradition; And to speak the truth plainly, the Faith of both resolves in the veneration they have for their Doctors; But whereas the one affirms, they do it by an intire Submission, they think it decent to say, they judge them infallible. And certainly, it is most reasonable that such as affirm the first, believe the last. The other because they pretend they believe the Church but conditionally, have denyed to her infallibility, tho generally they be as credulous as the other. And I find the Doctors of their Church as angry to be contradicted as the other, that is an ingredient goes to the Composition of all Clergy-Men, since it became a Trade, and went to make a part of the outward policy

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The 9. of October, 87.

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My Friend,

ALBEIT I judge I did fully answer to all thy Arguments in that Conference we had concerning the *necessity and possibility of Inward Immediate Revelation*, and of the *certainty of True Faith from thence proceeding*. Nevertheless, Because after we had made an end, and were parting, thou would needs remit to my further Consideration, the strength of thy Argument, as that in which thou supposed the very hing of the Question to lye: That I might satisfie thy desire, and that the Truth might more appear, I did further consider of it; But the more I weighed it, I found it the weaker: And therefore that thou thy self may make the truer Judgement of it, I thought meet to send thee my further considerations thereon, (which I had done err now, had not I both at *London* and elsewhere been diverted by other necessary occasions) Wherein, I doubt not, but thou will perceive a full and distinct answer to thy Argument. But if thou cannot as yet yield to the Truth, or thinks mine answer in any part to be defective, so that there yet remains with thee, any matter of doubt or scruple I doe earnestly desire thee, that as I for thy sake, and out

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of love to the Truth have, not been wanting to examine thy Argument, and to transmitt to thee my Considerations thereon; So thou may give thy self the trouble to write and send me what thou has further to say, which my Friend N. N. who delivers thee this, will at what time thou shall appoint receive from thee, and transmitt to me thy Letter, that at last the Truth may appear where it is.

And that the whole matter may the more clearly be understood, it will be fit in the first place, to propose thy Argument whereby thou opposes the *Immediat Revelation of GOD* in the Saints, thence concluding thou has fully overturned the foundation of the People called *Quakers*. Which Argument of thine is,

That since (as thou judges) the Beeing and Substance of the Christian Religion consisteth in the Knowledge of and Faith concerning the Birth, Life, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Christ Jesus; thou consider the substance of the Christian Religion as a contingent truth; which contingent truth is matter of fact: whence thou reasons, That matter of Fact cannot be known but by the relation of another, or by the perception of the outward Senses: Because there are naturally in our Souls no Ideas of contingent truths, such as are concerning necessary Truths: to wit, That GOD is, and that the whole is greater than the part; And since it may without absurdity be said, that GOD cannot make a contingent Truth to become a necessary Truth; neither can GOD reveal contingent Truths or matters of Fact

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But as contingent Truths are revealed ; But matters of Fact are not revealed but by the outward Senses : From whence thou concludes , That Men are not even obliged to believe GOD producing any Revelation in the Soul concerning matter of Fact , whether of a thing done or to be done , unless there be added some Miracles obvious to the outward senses , by which the Soul may be ascertained that that Revelation cometh from GOD : And this thou endeavours also to prove from the Scripture, Rom: 10. where the Apostle saith, Faith cometh by hearing : And because the Apostle speaketh afterwards of those who were Gent in the plural number : Thence thou concludes , That to be spoken of outward Preaching by the Ministry of Men : And since the Apostle ules a Question, saying, How shall they believe unless they hear ? Thou gathers from the Induction and Connexion of the Text, that the Apostle treats only of outward bearing ; thence concluding that without outward bearing, Faith cannot be produced : and therefore, that there can be no Immediat Revelation by the simple operation of the Spirit in the Mind , unless there be somewhat proposed to the Outward senses.

Before I proceed to a direct answer to this Argument, some things are necessary to be premised,

First then, That is falsly supposed, that the Essence of the Christian Religion consists in the Historicall Faith and Knowledge of the Birth, Death, Life, Resurrection and Ascension of Christ

That Faith and Historicall Knowledge is indeed a part of the Christian Religion; But not such an *Essentiall* part, as that without which the Christian Religion cannot consist; But an *Integrall* part, which goes to the compleating of the Christian Religion, as the Hands or Feet of a Man are *Integrall* parts of a Man, without which nevertheless a Man may exist, but not an intire and compleat Man.

Secondly, If by *Immediate Revelation* be understood such a Revelation of GOD as begets in our Souls an historicall Faith and Knowledge of the Birth of Christ in the flesh, without the means of the holy Scripture, we do not for such a Revelation as commonly given or to be expected by us or any other Christians; For albeit many other Evangelical Truths be manifested to us by the immediate manifestation of God, not using the Scripture as the means: yet the Historical Knowledge of Christ is not commonly manifested to us, nor to any others, but by the holy Scripture as the means, and that by way of a *Material Object*, even as when we see the Person of *Peter* or *Paul* by the help of the Sun's light; that light of the Sun reveals the Person of *Peter* or *Paul* to our visive Faculty immediately, yet not without the medium of that person concurring as a *material Object* to produce that sight, while the light of the Sun concurs as the *formal Object* of that vision of sight: So that when we Livingly and Spiritually know the History of the Birth of Christ in the flesh, the *Inward Revelation* or *Illumination*

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GOD, which is like the Suns light, proceeding from the *Divine Sun* doth shine into the eye of the Mind, and by *Its* influence moves the mind to assent unto the Historical Truth of CHRIST'S Birth, Life, &c. in the Reading or Hearing the Scripture, or meditating therein.

Thirdly, Nevertheless we do firmly assert, that GOD can most easily, clearly and certainly manifest to our minds the Historical Truths of CHRIST'S Birth, &c. when it so pleaseth Him, even without the Scripture or any other outward mean. And because this Argument seems to be formed against the possibility of such a Revelation, therefore I shall proceed to discuse it. But first, thou may mind that the Prophets who foretold CHRIST'S coming in the *Flesh*, and being to be born of a *Virgin*, and afterwards to suffer Death, did know these Truths of Fact, by the *Inward Inspiration* of GOD without Outward Means, for which see 1 Peter 1. 10, 11. Now that which hath been may be.

Fourthly, This Argument doth at most conclude that we cannot know *Naturally* any truth of Fact, but by the relation of another without us, or by the perception of the outward senses; Because there are *naturally* in our minds no *Ideas* concerning contingent Truths (and every Truth of Fact is a contingent Truth) as there are of necessary Truths. This then proveth that we cannot *naturally* know any contingent Truth but by the relation of another, or perception of

the outward senses : But that hindreth not, but we may know a contingent Truth by a *supernaturall Knowledge*, GOD supplying the place of an outward Relator, who is so true, that he may and ought to be believed; Sith GOD is the fountain of Truth.

Fifthly, When GOD doth make known unto Men any matter of Fact by Divine immediat Revelation or Inspiration, GOD speaking as to the Ear of the Heart of the inward Man, or as by his Finger writting it therein. Two things are to be considered in such an *Immediat Revelation*.

1. *Tomateriale*, The matter of fact or thing revealed which is contingent.

2. *Toformale*, The forme or mode, how the Revelation is made, which forme is an Inward, Divine and *supernaturall Revelation*, which is the voice or speech of GOD, inwardly speaking to the Ear of the inward Man, or Mind of Man, or a Divine writting, supernaturally imprinted therein. Now as to the *materiall part*, or the thing and matter revealed; This is indeed a contingent Truth, and of it self is not manifest to the Mind, but because of the form, that is, because of the *Divine mode* and *supernaturall* inward operation, the matter is known to be true: For that Divine and Supernatural Inward Operation, which the Mind doth feel and perceive in it self, is the Voice of GOD speaking unto Man, which by its *Nature* and *specifick Property*, is as clearly distinguished and understood to be the Voice of GOD

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GOD, as the voice of *Peter* or *James* is known to be the voice of such Men: for every Beeing as a Beeing is knowable, and that by its own specifick Nature or Property proceeding from its Nature, and hath its proper *Idea* by which it's distinguishable from every other thing, if so be it's *Idea* be stirred up in us, and clearly proposed to us.

Sixthly, Now as some Beeings are *Natural*, some *Supernatural*; so some *Ideas* are *Natural*, some *Supernatural*: And as when any *natural Idea* is excited in us, we clearly know it. So also when a *supernatural Idea* is raised, we clearly know that whereof it is the *Idea*: but the Voice of GOD speaking to the mind of Man, is a *supernatural Beeing*, and stirreth up in us a *supernatural Idea*, by which we clearly know that inward Voice to be the Voice of GOD, and not the voice or operation of another, or of any evil Spirit, or Angel, because none of these has a *supernatural Idea*, as the Voice of GOD, and his Divine Operation hath; for it is full of Vigour, Virtue, and Divine Glory, as saith the *Psalmist*, who had often experience of it, and we also in our measures are witnesses thereof, for the Voice of GOD is known to be his by its Divine Virtue.

Seventhly, The senses are either *Outward* or *Inward*, and the *Inward senses* are either *Natural* or *Supernatural*: We have an example of the Inward Natural Sense in being Angied or Pacified.

fied, in Love and Hatred, or when we perceive and discern any Natural Truth, (such as the Natural Maxims, to wit, *That the whole is greater then the part* : or when we deduce any Conclusion by the strength of Natural Reason, that Perception also in a larger sense may be called an *inward Sense*. But an Example of an *Inward supernatural Sense* is, when the Heart or Soul of a pious Man feels in it self *Divine Motions, Influences, and Operations*, which sometimes are as the voice or speech of GOD, sometimes as a most pleasant and glorious Illustration or visible Object to the inward Eye, Sometimes as a most sweet Savour or Taste, sometimes as a Heavenly and Divine Warmness, or (so to speak) Melting of the Soul in the Love of GOD. Moreover this *Divine and supernatural Operation* in the Mind of a Man is a true and most glorious Miracle, which when it is perceived by the *Inward and supernatural Sense*, divinely raised up in the Mind of Man, doth so evidently and clearly perswade the Understanding to assent to the thing revealed, that there is no need of an outward Miracle; for this Assent is not because of the thing it self, but because of the Revelation proposing it, which is the Voice of GOD : For when the Voice of GOD is heard in the Soul, the Soul doth as certainly conclude the truth of that Voice as the truth of GOD'S Being, from whom it proceeds.

These things being thus premised, I now proceed to a direct Answer: For what is said, that

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GOD cannot make a contingent Truth to become a necessarie Truth, I agree : But when any *Contingent Truth* is manifest to us by the *Immediat Revelation* of GOD : There is in it two things to be considered, to wit, the thing revealed which is *Contingent* ; And the Revelation it self, which upon the Supposition that it is a *Divine Revelation*, is *no contingent Truth*, but a most *Necessarie Truth*. And this all mankind will say, that this Proposition, *Every divine Revelation is necessarily true*, is as clear and evident as that Proposition, *That every Whole is greater then its Part*.

But thou wilt say, how knows thou that a *Divine Revelation* is a *Divine Revelation* ? I answer, how knows thou that a *Whole* is a *Whole*, and a *Part* is a *Part* ? Thou wilt say, by the *natural Idea* excited in me of a *Whole* and of a *Part*. I answer again, even so, a *Divine Revelation* is known to be such by a *Supernatural Idea* of *Divine Revelation* stirred up in us, and that by a *Divine Motion* or *Supernatural Operation*. But it is no wonder that Men who have no Experience of *Supernatural Ideas*, or at least do not heed them, doe deny them; which is as if a man naturally blind denyed Light, or Colours; or a deaf man Sounds, because they experience them not. Therefore we cannot dissemble that we feel a fervent Zeal, even Divinely kindled in us against such an absurd opinion, as affirms, *That God cannot ascertain us of his will in any contingent Truth, but by proposing it to the outward Senses*. This Opinion does
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in a manner turn Men into brutes, as if Man were not to believe his GOD, unless he propose what is to be believed to the outward Senses, which the beasts have common with us; yea it derogats from GOD's Power, and imputes weakness to him, as if he could not do that which not only both good and evil Angels can doe, but which the meanest Creatures can doe and the most unsensible; As for instance, the heat of the fire, the coldness of the Air, & Water worketh upon us; yea if a Pinn prick us, we feel it, & that by the outward Sense; because the Objects are outward and carnal. But since GOD is a most Pure and Glorious Spirit, when he operateth in the Innermost parts of our Minds by his will; Shall not he and his will be clearly felt according to his Nature? That is by a *spiritual and supernatural Sense*; For as the Nature of GOD is, so is the Nature of his will, to wit, purely spiritual; And therefore requireth a *Spiritual Sense* to discern it; which *Spiritual Sense* when it is raised up in us by a divine Operation, doth as clearly and certainly know the voice or revelation of the will of GOD, concerning any thing which GOD is pleased to reveal however *Contingent*, as the outward Sense knows, and perceives the *Outward Object*: And it is no less absurd to require of GOD, who is a most pure Spirit, to manifest his will to Men by the outward Senses, else not to be credited; As to require us to see sounds, and hear Light and Colours. For as the Objects of the
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outward Senses are not to be confounded, but every Object is to have its proper Sense: So must we judge of inward and spiritual Objects, which have their proper *Sense*, whereby they are to be perceived. And tell me how God doth manifest his will concerning matters of *Fact*, when he sends his Angels to men, since Angels (as is commonly received) have not outward Senses or at least not so gross ones as ours are? Yea, when Men dye and appear before the Tribunal of GOD, whether unto eternal Life or Death, how can they know this having laid down their bodies, and therewith their outward Senses? And nevertheless this Truth of GOD is a *Truth of Fact*, as is the historical Truth of Christs Birth in the Flesh. And which is yet more near; how do good and holy Men even in this Life most certainly know that they are in Favour and Grace with GOD? No *Outward Revelation* doth make this known unto them, but *the Spirit* (as saith the Apostle) *beareth witness with our Spirits that we are the Children of GOD*. For the meer Testimonie of a human Conscience, without the inward Testimonie of the holy Spirit, cannot beget in us a firm and immoveable Testimony of our Sonship, because the Heart of Man is deceitfull, and if the Testimony thereof were true, at most it is but a Human Testimonie which begetteth in us only an human Faith; But that Faith by which holy Men believe they are the Sons of GOD is a *Divine Faith*,

Faith, which leans upon a *Divine Testimony* of the holy Spirit, witnessing in them that they are the Sons of GOD. Moreover when a good Man feels in himself that undeclarable Joy of the holy Spirit, concerning which the holy Scripture speaks, and which is the common Priviledge of the Saints, how or whence feels he this Joy? Truly this Argument concludes no less against *this Heavenly Spiritual Joy* which is begotten in the Souls of the Saints by the holy Spirit, then it does against the immediat Revelation of GOD; for there is *no natural Idea* in Men of this spiritual Joy, else meer natural Men, yea such as are prophane and ungodly would feel it as much as the Godly: But because it is a *Supernatural thing*, Therefore it can have *no true Idea*, but what is Supernatural. Moreover whence is it that prophane Men feel sometimes in themselves the Wrath of GOD as Fire, when all things as to the outward go as prosperously with them as with the Godly, and oftentimes more prosperously? For there is *no natural Idea* in Men of this inward Wrath of GOD: There is also an inward Grief oftentimes raised up in Wicked Men from the sense of this Wrath of GOD, which very much vexeth and tormenteth their Minds, and nevertheless this Grief hath *no natural Idea* in us: For oftentimes wicked Men feel not this Sorrow, for God sometimes is, as it were silent while the Wicked sin, as in *Psalm 50*.

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that there are in Men *Supernatural Ideas* of supernatural Beings; which *Ideas* are nevertheless not perceived by us unless they be stirred up by some *Supernatural Operation* of GOD, which raiseth up in us *Supernatural and Spiritual Senses* which by their Nature are as distinguishable from the natural Senses whether inward or outward, as the natural Senses are distinguished one from another by their specifick Difference. Of which Spiritual Senses the Scripture speaks frequently, as *Heb. 5. and 14.* Where is spoken of the Spiritual senses in general, by which the spiritual Man hath the discerning of Good and Evil; which Good is of a spiritual Nature, and conduceth to feed in us a Spiritual and Divine Life; And the Evil is of that kind by which the spiritual Life is in us hurt: To wit Sins, whether carnal or spiritual: All which cannot be discerned but by such who have *Spiritual Senses* stirred up in them, as saith the Apostle. In other places the Scripture also speaketh of these Spiritual senses, in particular, as of the Spiritual seeing: *Pf: 34. 9.* Of the spiritual Hearing, *Pf: 85. and 9.* Of spiritual Tasting, *Pf: 34. 8.* Of Spiritual smelling, *Cant. 1. 3.* of spiritual touching, *Acts 17: 8.* and in many other places of Scripture we read of those Spiritual Senses in particular. Yea, it is the Promise of the Gospel, that *The glory of GOD shall be seen of holy Men*, such as are clean of Heart, even in this Life: *Isa. 33. 17. Mat. 5. 8.* Which were fulfilled in the primitive Christians, see *John 1. 14. 1 John 1. 1, 2, 3, 4. 2 Cor. 3. 18.* and Chap. 4. 6. But what is this Vision

of GOD and Divine Glory which the Soules of the Saints enjoy in this Life, which is only as the Earnest or first Fruits of that more abundant glorious Vision in the Life to come, concerning which the Scripture so much declareth, which is the highest happines of the Immortal Soul.

For this Argument seemeth to doe no less Injury to the Saints, then to rob them of this most glorious Treasure, both in this Life and that to come; For there is in us *no Natural Idea* of this Divine Glory, as there is not of GOD himself, which is any wayes proportionable unto so great Happines which the Scripture so much declareth of, by which the Godly are rewarded, partly in this Life, and plenary in that which is to come. We confess indeed, there is in all Men as well the Godly as ungodly, some sort of *Idea of GOD*, as of a most perfect Being; and that therefore this Proposition, *There existeth a most perfect Being*, doth as clearly appear to Human understanding, as that *the whole is greater then the part*, And therefore this proposition, *That a most perfect Being existeth*, ought to be numbred among the Principalls that of themselves are manifest; *But this Idea of God* is as manifest to Ungodly as to Godly Men, yea is as clearly perceived by the Devill, as by the most holy Angels, for all the Devills know that GOD is; But yet how blind is the Devill, and all wicked Men as to the Vision of GOD, which is the chief reward of the Saints.

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There is then either *no such Vision of GOD*, neither in this Life nor in that to come, or there is a *Supernatural Idea of GOD in us*, by which we are made capable of this Vision: Which *Supernaturall Idea of GOD*, differeth much from that *Natural Idea of GOD*, which *Cartesius* and his followers so much talk of, (albeit others long before *Cartesius* did observe this *Natural Idea of GOD*, and spoke of it) But the happiness of the Saints consists not in contemplating *this Naturall Idea of GOD*; Else the wicked would be as happy as the Godly, yea the very Devill as the most holy Angel; Since as is said, both the Devill and most wicked Men doe as clearly perceive *this Natural Idea of GOD*, as the most holy Men or Angels.

If the Scriptures then be true, there is in Men a *Supernatural Idea of GOD*, which altogether differs from this naturall *Idea*, I say, in *all Men*; Because all men are capable of Salvation; and consequently, of injoying this Divine Vision: Now this capacity consisteth herein, that they have such a *Supernatural Idea* in themselves: For, if there were no such *Idea* in them it were impossible they should so know God: For *whatsoever is clearly and Distinctly known, is known by its proper Idea*, nether can otherways be clearly and distinctly known; For the *Ideas* of all things are Divinely planted in our Souls, for they are not begotten in us by outward objects, or outward causes, (As the better Philosophy teacheth)

but

but only are by these outward things excited or stirred up: And this is true not only in *Supernatural Ideas* of GOD, and things Divine, and in *Natural Ideas* of the naturall Principals of Human understanding, and conclusions thence deduced by the strength of human reason; but even in the *Ideas* of outward objects, which are perceived by the outward Senses; As that noble Christian Philosopher *Boetius* hath well observed, to which also the *Cartesian Philosophie* agreeth: For when I see any outward object, whether it be a Man, or Horse, or Bird, the outward object does not treat in my eye, nor yet in my mind the *Idea* of those things; For the outward object does nothing but Imprint in our sensible Organs a Corporall motion: Now there is nothing in a Corporall motion that can form in us, the *Ideas* of those things; For all *Ideas* are of a Spiritual Nature: Now nothing that is Corporall can produce that which is Spirituall, because the less excellent cannot produce the more excellent, Else the effect would exceed its cause, which is against all sound reason that it should bring forth what were of a higher and more excellent kind. Therefore all *Ideas* whether *Of Natural or Spiritual things*, are Divinely implanted in our minds; Which nevertheless do not alwayes appear, but sometimes appear, and sometimes are as it were hid in us, and sometimes are stirred up in us by causes outward or inward, and again do as it were sleep and shun our observation, and seem not

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not to be otherwayes distinguished by our minds, but as thoughts and perceptions of the mind from the mind it self. That is as the *Mode* from the *Subject*, or as a *Bodily Motion* from the body whereof it is the Motion; For as is the Relation of a Bodily Motion to a Body, so is the Relation of a thought or perception of the mind to the mind. In this nevertheless they differ that the mind can move it self and operate in it self which a body cannot doe; But as a Body can be moved by another, So also can the Mind after its manner be moved by another, and that both by outward and inward causes; But chiefly by GOD himself, in whose hand all Souls and Creatures are. But of these things there is enough said at present, and I hope, I have not thus far Impertinently Philosophised.

To return again to the matter in question: It is already proved, That there is in a Man a Supernaturall Idea of GOD, from whence it easily may be concluded There are other Supernaturall Ideas in man also. To wit, Concerning Divine and Supernaturall things. Yea (as the Saints experience doth prove it) neither doth sound reason any ways contradict it.)

As there are then Naturall Ideas concerning the things of the natural World, as for instance, Ideas of Light and Colours, Ideas of Voice and Sounds, Ideas of Savouring and Smelling, Ideas of Tasting and Feeling,

as of Heat and Cold, of Grief and Joy: It follows also *that there are Ideas of supernatural things, concerning the Divine and supernatural things of the Divine and Supernaturall World; As Ideas of those things above mentioned in the Spiritual World; And as the Naturall Ideas are stirred up in us by outward and Naturall Bodies; So those Divine and Supernatural Ideas are stirred up in us by a certain Principle, which is a body in naturalls in Relation to the Spirituall World; And therefore may be called a Divine Body; Not as if it were a part of GOD, who is a most pure Spirit, But the Organ or Instrument of GOD, by which he worketh in us and stirreth up in us these Ideas of Divine things, This is that Flesh and Blood of Christ, by which the Saints are nourished, which is a Mystery to all unregenerated and meer natural Men, never to be reached by them, while they remaine in that state.*

Now if there be such *Supernatural Ideas*, there are also *Senses*, or Perceptive faculties by which those *Ideas* are perceived, for those are two relatives that suppose and inerr one another: But in wicked men those *Senses* or faculties do as it were sleep (as the Visive faculty of a blind man) But in the Godly they are stirred up. Now by these *Divine and Spirituall Senses* which are distinct and distinguishable from all the naturall faculties of the Soul,

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Soul, whether of Imagination or naturall reason, Spirituall minded men do behold the Glory and Beauty of GOD; In respect whereof and for which all the Glory of this World is despicable to them; Yea even as dross and dung, and they also hear GOD *Inwardly speaking in their Souls* words truly Divine and Heavenly, full of Virtue and Divine Life; And they savour and taste of Divine things, and doe as it were handle them with the hands of their Souls, And those Heavenly Enjoyments do as really differ in their nature from all false similitudes and feintious appearances of them, which either the mind of Man by its own strength can imitate, or any evill spirit to deceive man can counterfit, as a true Man differs from the dead Image of a Man, or true Bread, Honey, Wine or Milk doth from the meer Picture of those things. And albeit either the Imagination of Man or subtilty of the Devil may Counterfit false likenesses of these Injoyments, by which men may be deceived; and no doubt many are deceived; That doth not hinder but that those divine Injoyments are clearly perceived in such in whom the *Divine and spirituall senses* are truly opened, and the true *Supernaturall Ideas* of those things truly raised up: And if there be at any time a mistake, *the Divine Illumination* is not the cause of that mistake, but some evill disposition of the Mind, as happeneth in those things relating

to naturall Reason; For there are many false appearances of Reason, which differ as much from true Reason, as those false and pretended Revelations and Diabolicall Inspirations from such as are truly Divine. Now how many Men who would be esteemed Philosophers, are miserably deceived by those false likenesses of Reason? Judging their false Reasons to be the true similitudes of things and solid Ratiocinatione; which nevertheless moveth no man of sound Reason to reject sound and solid Reason, as doubtfull and uncertain: For even sound naturall Reason is an excellent Gift of GOD, and very usefull to mankind, when used in its proper place; But let none think to comprehend by their naturall reason things that are of a divine and supernaturall kind: And as we use to do when any one is deceived by false appearances of Reason, we endeavour to reduce them to contemplate the first naturall Ideas of naturall things, and to meditate therein, which is as a *Test, or Touch-stone*, by which all the appearances and likenesses of Reason are to be examined, if they contradict them to be rejected: So also when any one is deceived by his own Imagination, or the cunning of Satan, thinking any evil inspiration of the devil to be a true Divine Revelation, He that is so deceived, is to be reduced to the naturall Ideas of things (if so be that pretended Revelation doth contradict them

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them; For no true Divine Revelation can contradict the true naturall Idea) or to the Supernaturall Ideas of Divine things, which are most simple, clear and obvious to the minds of men, if they will turn their minds to the Divine seed in them; or at least those Ideas are readily and easily stirred up: For as in Naturall Ideas, so in Supernaturall, Some are more easily raised then others; For there is an certain order both of Naturall and Supernaturall Ideas, whereby they are gradually excited; Nor is there any Mortall Man in whose Mind at some time or other there is not stirred up some Idea, that's truly Supernaturall and Divine: And who hath not felt in himself both the Wrath and Judgement of GOD for his sins; And also some tender and gentle taste of GOD'S Love and Goodness, by which wicked men are invited to Repentance. Now that which is thought to be a Divine Revelation, is felt to contradict any Divine and Supernaturall Idea, which is clearly perceived in the Soul, it is a manifest token that it is not a Divine Revelation, but either a false Imagination, or the wicked suggestion of some evill spirit.

But to proceed if we will hear the Scripture (as all Christians ought) It testifies to us, That GOD hath declared his Mind and Will; even concerning Contingent Truths so come in the Prophets; As that of the first to the last doth evidently declare, GOD who

at sundry times, and in diverse manners spoke to our Fathers in the Prophets; Yea let us hear the Prophets themselves. *Hosea Chap: 1.* saith plainly, *That the Word of the LORD was made in him,* As it is in the Heb. *Habakuk* also sayes, *As he was standing on his Watch to see what Jehovah would speak in him:* And it is so manifest that the most Heavenly Revelations are by *Inward Illustrations* and *Inspirations* in the very minds of the Prophets, That it is strange how any that believes the Scripture should doubt of it. And if it happened at any time such Revelations were made in the naturall Imaginations of the Prophets, or any of their *Inward Naturall Senses*, Then it may be confessed, they could not be infallibly certain they came from GOD, unless they also felt GOD in the *Divine and Supernaturall Senses*; by which they did most neerly approach to him, from these Superior and most *Inward Senses* working upon the lower and less noble Faculties of the Mind. But which ever way the Prophets were certain that they were Inspired of GOD, even when they foretold *Contingent Truths* to come; It is without doubt they were most certainly perswaded that they were *Directly Inspired*, and that frequently *without any Outward Miracle*; For *John the Baptist* did no Miracle, and many Prophefied where there appeared no Miracle, as in the Scripture may be often observed. And, we also *by the Inspiration of the same Divine Spirit*

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Spirit by which the Prophets prophesied do believe their Words and Writtings to be Divine concerning Contingent Truths, as well past as to come; else that Faith by which we believe the Scripture would not be *Divine* but *meerly Humane*: And thence we need no outward Miracles to move us to Believe the Scriptures, And therefore much less were they necessary to the Prophets who Write them; For we see in many places of the Prophets, where they declare Prophecies as revealed to them of GOD, there is not a word mentioned of any outward Miracle, as that by which alone they were certain of it. Moreover the falseness of this Argument doth appear, in that the Scripture doth declare many *Contingent Truths* to have been revealed to the Prophets in *Dreams*: Now as naturall and wicked men do not see what they dream, by a reall perception of the Outward Senses, but by *Inward Ideas* which are presented to the Mind and perceived by it: *so it is also in Divine Revelations* of this nature, Of which we have a clear Example in *Joseph* the Husband of the Blessed Virgin, who when he observed his Wife with Child, was told in a Dream, That She had Conceived by the Holy Ghost. Now I would Know, to which of *Joseph's* Outward Senses was this revealed? or what miracle had he to Induce him to Believe? Which could neither be proved, (so as to make an Infal-

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lible application to *Mary*) by the Testimony
 of the Scripture, And which being against
 the Order of nature did choak his reason.
 The Scripture mentions no miracle in this
 matter, and yet no doubt *Joseph* had high-
 ly sinned, had he not Believed this Revelati-
 on, and notwithstanding rejected his Wife
 as an Adulteress: But if thou say, That ac-
 cording to thy Hypothesis, there must have been
 a miracle; That is only to beg the Ques-
 tion: And how false this Hypothesis is,
 The Apostle shews clearly, *Corinth. 2. 14.*
*The Naturall or Animall Man knoweth not, receiv-
 eth not the things of GOD:* Now Divine Reve-
 lations are of this Nature; and if either
 chiefly or only those things were to be Judged
 by the *Outward Senses* it would contradict the
 Apostle, For natural Men, yea the most wick-
 ed have the use of the outward senses as true
 and exact as the most Godly: And whereas
 the Apostle adds, *For they are Spiritually Discern-
 ed:* It puts the Matter out of all Ques-
 tion; For thence it abundantly appears,
 that it is discerning is not by the *Outward Sen-
 ses*, according to the following verse, for the
 Apostle saith, *The Spirituall Man Judgeth all
 things:* This then must be done by some senses
 or Properties Peculiar to the Spirituall man,
 and in which he excels the naturall man,
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things cannot be by the outward senses, either as the chief or only means, as is falsely contended for.

Now as to these words of the Apostle, *Rom. 10.* *That Faith comes by Hearing;* Zuinglius observed well, That the Apostle intended not to affirm Faith to come by the hearing of the *Outward Word*, Neither doth the following words prove it; *How shall they Believe unless they hear? And how shall they hear without a Preacher? And how shall they Preach unless they be sent?* For the Apostle uses these words not as his Arguments, but as Objections which might be formed, As the same Apostle uses in other places; To which Objections he answers in the same Chapter, as appears verse 18. *But I say, have they not all heard? Yes truly, their Voice went into all the Earth; That is of the Father and Son; Or the Father in the Word, which Word is not only neer us, But (according to the same Apostle, in the same Chapter) in our Mouths, and in our Hearts.* But further thou can conclude nothing from this, *But that Faith is begotten by Outward Hearing only, and no otherwise:* For this is the strength of thy Argument, *That since Faith cannot be without Outward Hearing;* Therefore nothing can be certainly believed, but where somewhat is proposed to the *Outward Hearing*, For if thou acknowledge Faith can be begotten any otherwise then by *Hearing*, thou looses the strength

strength of thy Argument: And if that
 Argument hold *That Faith comes only by*
Outward Hearing, thou destroyes the whole
Hypothesis; For having before affirmed
 that outward miracles are sufficient to render
 one certain of the Truth of any Revelation;
 those miracles whether it be the healing of the
 Sick, or the raising of the Dead, would avail
 nothing, because those (as for most part all
 miracles) are obvious to the sight, not to the
 Hearing: And if it be not by *Outward Hearing*
 only, thou can conclude nothing from this
 place. But I the more wonder, thy using of
 this Argument, considering the Discourse we
 had together before we entred upon this
 debate; For when we were speaking of the
 Opinions of a certain Person, who denyed the
 certainty of every thing, but what was discerned
 by the outward Senses, thou condemned as
 most absurd; But why, I cannot conceive
 since there is no great difference betwixt
 those two Opinions, the one saith, *There can
 be no certainty concerning any Truth, whether
 they be necessary or Contingent, but by the
 perception of the Senses*; The other affirms
 the same of *Contingent Truths*, though not
 of *Necessary Truths*; But among the
 number of *Contingent Truths* thou Esteems
 what belongs to Christian Religion: For thou
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the necessary Truths only to belong to naturall Religion. This then is all the difference that that other Person sayes, There is no certainty of any Religion, neither Naturall nor Christian but by the perception of the Outward Senses; But thou sayes, though thou Esteems the Certainty of Naturall Religion to be without them, yet not of the Christian Religion. But again since thou Esteems that not *Naturall Religion* but the *Christian Religion* is necessary to Salvation; Thou must necessarily conclude, *That these Truths which are necessary to Salvation are only known and beleived by the benefit of the Outward Senses*: In which Conclusion, which is the Summ of all, thou yields the Matter to that other Person. But lastly, If all the certainty of our Faith, Hope, and Salvation, did depend upon the Infallibility of outward Senses, we should be most miserable; since these Senses can be easily deceived, and by many outward Casualties, and Naturall infirmities, whereunto the Godly are no les subject then the wicked, are often vitiated and there are (as the Scripture affirms) false miracles which as to the outward cannot be distinguished from the True, of which we cannot infallibly Judge by the outward Senses, which only discern what is outward.

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There is a necessity then to have recourse to some other Means.

From all which it does appear how fallacious and weak this Argument is, but thanks be unto GOD, who would not that our Faith should be built upon so uncertain and doubtfull a Foundation: And whoever hath known True Faith, or hath felt the Divine Testimony of GOD'S Spirit in his Soul, will judge otherwise, neither will be moved by such Reasonings; I pray GOD therefore remove these Clouds which darken thy Understanding, that thou may perceive the Glorious Gospel of CHRIST. This is that Saving Word of Grace which I commend thee unto; And that GOD may give thee a Heart inclinable to believe and obey the Truth, is the desire of,

Thy Faithfull Friend

R. BARCLAY.

The 24th. of the Month,

called, November, 1676.

(This Letter a Year ago at the desire of my Friend, R. B. I delivered into the hands of the aforementioned Ambassadour, desiring his answer in writing, which he then promised; but not having as yet done, It was seen meet to be published.

B. F.

Rotterdam the 28 of March;

1678.

